

St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 125717 |
| Local Authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 315295 |
| Inspection date | 5 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Capper |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4-11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 84 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | E M Stewart |
| Headteacher | Robert Thomas Gargan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 June 2004 |
| School address | Wathen Road Warwick CV34 5BG |
| Telephone number | 01926 493959 |
| Fax number | 01926 410592 |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4-11 |
| Inspection date | 5 November 2007 |
| Inspection number | 315295 |

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies greatly from year to year but is broadly average overall. Children's attainment when they start school in the Reception Year has been rising in the last two years. It is slightly above average in the current year. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A small proportion of pupils start school still in the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where pupils behave well and learn good values. Leaders have worked hard to tackle a legacy of underachievement caused by past staffing issues. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Children settle quickly in the Reception class and make satisfactory progress from their different starting points. Standards are rising in Years 1 to 6, although they remain below average in the current Year 6 because there are a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this year group. Although there have been many recent improvements, progress varies from subject to subject. Pupils make the best progress in English. This is because the school allocates a generous amount of time to teaching basic literacy skills and teachers are generally successful at meeting pupils' differing needs in English lessons. In mathematics and science, there are occasions when teachers do not expect enough of the pupils, especially the more able and this sometimes slows the pace of learning and progress.

Adults take good care of the pupils. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. There is a calm and happy atmosphere in school. Pupils are friendly and polite and happily take responsibility. They thoroughly enjoy school, especially the way that adults enrich the satisfactory curriculum by providing a good range of activities outside lessons. Pupils make a good contribution to the community by participating successfully in events such as 'Warwick in Bloom'. Pupils thoughtfully respect cultural differences and, in this Catholic school, appreciate the value of prayer. As one pupil said, 'prayers make me feel better'.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is moving forward because the headteacher has a clear understanding of what remains to be done. In the last three years, the school has collected a wide range of information about pupils' progress but this is not used rigorously to check that all are doing well enough. This makes it difficult for the leaders to set challenging targets or to identify dips in progress as soon as they arise. The school's development plans set a clear agenda for improvement but are not specific enough about what is to be achieved so that success can be checked. Nevertheless, the school has shown in the way that it has improved pupils' progress, especially in English, that it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The school has good links with a wide range of partners. Parents are pleased with the school and many commented on how provision has improved since the previous inspection. One parent summed up their views; 'The atmosphere is respectful and trusting and pastoral care is good'. These comments successfully capture the essence of this improving school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching enables children to make at least sound progress in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year). By the start of Year 1, most children are working securely at or above the levels expected for their age. Members of staff are supportive and friendly and work together well, enabling children to settle quickly and to gain confidence. Interesting activities promote learning particularly well in communication, language and literacy. For example, children extend speaking skills well when talking about the role-play 'cave'. A suitable range of activities indoors and outside and a calm atmosphere help children to learn to share and work together sensibly. Teachers provide sensitive support when children are

working but there are some missed opportunities to stretch the more able when they are working independently. There are clear and appropriate plans to improve provision. These rightly include developing further the opportunities for children to improve numeracy skills and improving resources for physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers always pitch work at the right level for all pupils, especially the more able, in mathematics and science.
- Make sharper use of information about pupils' progress to check that all are doing well enough and to set challenging targets.
- Ensure that the school's plans for improvement set out more clearly what is to be achieved so that leaders can check whether these targets have been met.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year and steady progress is maintained in the rest of the school. Although standards are below average overall in Year 6, this is because there are a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this year group. In the rest of the school, where there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are generally higher. For example, they are above average in Year 2. Higher overall standards reflect improvements in teaching and learning over the last three years. Leaders accept that more needs to be done to ensure that progress is even from subject to subject. In the last year, the school has rightly focused on improving pupils' literacy skills and this has helped to ensure that pupils made good progress in reading and writing. In mathematics and science, where progress is now satisfactory, teachers do not always ensure that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils, especially the more able, which slows progress.

Pupils generally meet their targets although these are not always challenging enough to ensure more than satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others. Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English make good progress in improving their speaking skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils play and work together amicably and are polite and friendly. Their good behaviour is evident in the thoughtful way they support each other, right from when they start school. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils encouraged each other to do well by spontaneously applauding when questions were answered correctly. Pupils' good attendance demonstrates their thorough enjoyment of school. Pupils are keen to learn although they do not always take enough care with the presentation of their work.

Pupils take responsibility well. For example, they are keen to maintain an eco-friendly school by recycling. The school council is proud to have helped organise a 'relaxing area' in the school garden. Activities such as these, as well as pupils' steady progress in developing basic skills,

prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Pupils lead moderately healthy lifestyles. They appreciate the value of eating fruit and vegetables and make reasonably healthy choices about their own diets. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe. For example, they accurately recount safety advice given by visitors such as the fire brigade.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers form good relationships with pupils and use the interactive whiteboards well to explain new work. Clear explanations and questioning are used effectively to engage the pupils' interest and to help them understand what they are expected to do in lessons. Teachers successfully meet differing needs in English but in mathematics and science expectations are not consistently high enough. This means that there are occasions when work is not pitched at the right level for some pupils, particularly the more able. Work is marked frequently but comments made do not always show pupils how they are to improve. Teaching assistants provide valuable support for groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to ensure that they are able to participate fully in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for literacy is better than that for numeracy and science because more time is allowed for this subject and there has been a big focus on improving pupils' progress in English in the last year. This has been effective. The curriculum is less successful at meeting pupils' differing needs in mathematics and science because planning is not adjusted sufficiently to ensure that there is enough challenge for all pupils, especially the more able. There are good opportunities for older pupils to learn French and Spanish. However, in some classes, the time allowed for physical education is below national guidelines.

A good range of clubs and special themed days enrich the curriculum well. For example, members of staff and pupils dress up as characters from stories by Roald Dahl. These activities successfully support pupils' good personal skills and increase their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

'Since my children started school they have felt welcomed and supported'. This parental comment encapsulates the good quality of care given by staff. Pupils say that if they have a concern they can 'have a chat with the teacher' and that 'any upsets are dealt with well'. Good induction systems ensure that children quickly learn new routines when they join the Reception Year.

The school has suitable methods to assess pupils' learning but information collected is not evaluated well enough to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged. Individual and group targets in English and mathematics give pupils something to aim at and help them understand how to improve their work. In the Reception Year, teachers maintain careful notes on children's progress. The school identifies and supports pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities satisfactorily and sets them clear targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders are hardworking and enthusiastic and they are moving the school in the right direction. The headteacher has established a caring ethos that is reflected in the school's commitment to providing a happy haven for pupils from differing backgrounds. There is a relatively new team of staff in school and subject leaders are developing their skills satisfactorily. Members of staff work together well, although development planning does not show clearly how success is to be checked. Nevertheless, there have been many successful recent initiatives that have had a positive effect, especially in English. Consequently, national test results have risen significantly since the previous inspection.

Leaders understand what still needs improving because there are satisfactory systems for evaluating how well the school is doing. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching carefully and his support has helped it to improve. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress are thorough but information is not analysed in sufficient detail to check whether all groups of pupils are doing well enough or to set challenging targets.

Governors are supportive. They are beginning to do more to challenge the school as they develop a better understanding of how to use test data to check how well the school is doing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

| | |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

| | |
|--|-----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary Immaculate Catholic Primary School, Warwick, CV34 5BG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school and also some things that need improving.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress.
- Children in the Reception class settle quickly into school life.
- Your behaviour is good. We are very pleased that you enjoy school so much and that the school council is taking such a keen interest in school development.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they give you suitable help when you find work difficult.
- You are taught all the things that you should be taught. There are many interesting things to do outside lessons, including clubs and special days.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.
- The headteacher knows what still needs to be improved and has helped to improve your progress since the previous inspection.
- All members of staff are working hard to make sure that you learn even more quickly.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that teachers always provide you with challenging work, especially in mathematics and science.
- Make sharper use of information about your progress to check that you are all learning quickly enough and to set you challenging targets.
- Ensure that the school's plans for improvement are more detailed so that leaders can check whether targets have been met.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by always trying to produce neat work when writing.

Yours faithfully Mr M Capper Lead inspector